(b) Several factors such as rapid growth of population, limited resources, poverty, lack of awareness, etc. are responsible for slower progress in certain areas.

(c) The Government has taken several steps to improve the condition of children in the country. The Integrated Child Development Services Programme delivers an integrated package of basic services including supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, immunization, health check-up, referral services, and nutrition and health education. The Reproductive and Child Health Programme was launched in 1997 for providing child health care and maternal services. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan has been launched with the primary objective to provide free and quality elementary education to all children by 2010. The proposed Constitutional **(93rd Amendment) Bill, 2001** has the objective of making education of all children in the age group of 6—14 years a fundamental right. The Government is in the process of finalising a National Nutrition Mission for the eradication of malnutrition in the country. A National Policy and Charter for Children is being finalized and a National Commission for Children to monitor proper implementation of existing laws for children and protection of child rights is also being set up.

Value-based education

5470. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMA CHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a two-day "South-Zone Vice-Chancellores' conference" was held in Mysore from September 30, 2001, for discussion on a wide-range of issues, including value-base education in universities, role of private sector in higher education, with a special focus on problems facing the university education in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that as many as 60 Vice-Chancellors from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu have participated in the conference;

(c) what were the main subjects discussed and decisions arrived at; and

(d) what steps are being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by the Association of the Indian Universities (AIU), a two days, 'South-Zone Vice-Chancellors Conference' was organised by AIU at Mysore on 29th and 30th September, 2001. The Conference was attended by 47 Vice-Chancellors of Southern Universities, besides others.

(c) and (d) The following issues were discussed during the Conference:—

— Issues pertaining to distance education

— Private initiatives in higher education

— Monitoring mechanism for qualitative education in universities

— Restructing of first degree education

The Conference was primarily meant to apprise the Vice-Chancellors on the thinking of different universities on the issues indicated above. The Vice-Chancellors are expected to formulate their own activities on the basis of their collective thinking.

Child care

5471. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether, out of every 100 children born today, 63 births are not registered at all and 47suffer from malnutrition in the first three years of live, and as many as 26 per cent are born with birth weight, less than 2500 grams;

(b) whether 15 per cent of the children never go to school and out of the remaining who join first grade, only 52 per cent reach the fifth grade; and

(c) if so, what specific steps are being taken by Government for more investment on children, especially on their health, education and protection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) As per the latest available data, births of 40% of children are